

writers could not have arrived at the plan for a national system of libraries which is outlined in another section of the Report.' From the beginning Mr Hall was also a member of the Carnegie Library Advisory Group. In 1938 he became President, N.Z.L.A., and 1939 the Association was incorporated by Act of Parliament. It is very largely to Mr Hall's sound advice and help in gaining Government approval that the Association owes the measure. Following the passing of The New Zealand Library Association Act, 1939, its rules required amending, and Mr Hall again gave splendid help to the Legislation Committee of the Association, while in addition he drafted standing orders for the conduct of Annual Meetings and Conferences. It is hoped that in his retirement Mr Hall will still have time to devote to Association affairs.

'The Smaller Town Library,' 'The Failure of Inter-loan,' and 'Publishing in New Zealand,' were papers given at Conference last February. P. Taylor is librarian of the Public Library, Tauranga; J. Monro has had charge of the reference service, Country Library Service, and E. V. Chaffey is of the firm of Whitcombe and Tombs.

## PUBLISHING IN NEW ZEALAND

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*By E. V. Chaffey*

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A PUBLISHER HAS BEEN CALLED many names at times, but possibly the best appropriate definition is a 'public benefactor.' A publisher is rather facetiously described as—

'A man past middle life, spare, wrinkled, independent, cold, passive, non-committal, with eyes like a cod-fish, calm, and as damnably composed as a concrete post. A human petrification with a heart of stone and without charm or the friendly germ, minus bowels, passions, or a sense of humour. Happily they never reproduce and all of them finally go down to the "bottomless pit."'

My own definition is that a publisher must be a Meccano man; he has to have ability to assess manuscripts, both from the literary and the commercial viewpoints. He has to have a knowledge of typography, of the advantages or disadvantages of linotype or other forms of type-

setting, also the advantages or otherwise of lithographing and photographing print, machining, lithographing and binding, and then he should know something of the law of copyright and libel. (In our daily life we often hear that truth is stranger than fiction, and believe me, the law of copyright is stranger than either.) He must have a knowledge of authors' agreements and finally, finance.

The essential needs of a publishing house are—

1. An adequate and regular supply of manuscripts and ability to print them.
2. An organisation for the distribution of its publications, through the booksellers or other avenues by means of travellers, newspaper advertising and circulars.
3. Most important, an efficient editorial department.

Little is known to the general public of the functions of an editorial department, but they are responsible; it has to read and assess all manuscripts that come into the House and make suggestions for improvement. In the case of technical and scientific or specialised works it sends them out to some expert on the subject and pays for his opinions; you will realise that it is far better to spend £10 or £20 on experts' opinions than to expend £800 on the production of a book which, when it appears, is adversely criticised, or found to be unsuitable for the purpose for which it was intended. The editorial department's staff concerned check the English, composition, spelling and punctuation. It checks every proper name, date, geographical place name and all the facts. That is arduous and laborious work. I well remember one manuscript that we had; it was so full of biblical names and facts that I suppose the cost of the editorial department was quite as high as the publishing cost. Our editorial department and its valuable reference library costs about £3,000 per year, but we feel it is worth it because when the books appear from the press they are practically 100 per cent. correct in all details such as spelling, dates, etc., and then they just stand on the basis of the value of the author's own work.

Now the question of the New Zealand novel. It is often thought that we as a publishing concern are not interested in the New Zealand novel. That is not correct. Over the years we have published a number of them; the results have been patchy and this has taught us caution. I have been amazed to find that I cannot recall a New Zealand novel published and printed in New Zealand that has got out of one edition. I have spoken to various bookseller friends

and none can recall one. This refers to complete novels and not to volumes of short stories like the very interesting 'Man and His Wife.' For novels our London publishing House has two other services by which it renders aid to the New Zealand novelists, who send their manuscripts to London and have them published there. This comes into publishing in New Zealand, because when we come into the picture we assume all the functions and duties of the publisher—distribution, travelling, wholesaling, advertising, etc. We act as the publisher. Perhaps some delegates do not know the plan on which British publishers print novels of new or minor novelists. They work on a basis of 2,000 copies for printing, and bind them up as required; these they hope to sell to the United Kingdom market, big libraries, circulating libraries, and the book-sellers in the county where the story is set, or the town in which the author lives. They estimate 600 to 800 copies for that market and 600 to 700 copies for the Dominions and Crown Colonies. Those quantities are not great but the new writer has a way to make. In the last complete year, 1938, 1800 novels were published in Great Britain, and of them about 500 were first works of new writers or of minor authors, that is, about 15 a week. Now in purchasing for your own library you, like most other people, side-step new writers; you wait until they make good. Please remember that when I am dealing with these New Zealand writers who send their works to London I do not include those novelists who have very excellent sales, such as—A. G. Rosman, G. B. Lancaster, Ngaio Marsh, Rosemary Rees, Elizabeth Milton.

When the London publisher receives a manuscript from New Zealand he generally brings it along to our London House and says—'Well, what can you do about it?' We read it and the next morning we say—'We will support this new novel to the extent of 1000, 2000, or 4000 copies.' So the publisher goes away and joyfully instructs his printer to print 3000 instead of 2000 copies and instead of 200 or 300 copies the extra 1000 copies are sent to New Zealand.

Some of the books I recall are—Judge Acheson's *Plume of the Arawas*, Gloria Rawlinson's *Perfume Vendor*, Robin Hyde's novels, J. A. Lee's novels, Nell Scanlan's novels, Grieve's *Sketches in Maoriland*.

There is another service for the help of New Zealand writers to get their books published overseas, called in our warehouse the 'Rescue the Perishing Department.' There are various books that for some reason or other have gone



out of print, and that we consider are worth persevering with, so we arrange with the publisher either to prepare for us complete new editions, or alternatively, to get the original publisher to reprint and reinstate them in his own list. Whitcombe & Tombs have always been interested in bringing back into print these books that are of interest to the public. In earlier days we brought back into print many works that were of value to New Zealand readers, such as—

Earle's *Nine Months Residence in New Zealand in 1827*, E. J. Wakefield's *Adventure in New Zealand*, Robt. McNab's *Murihiku*, Judge Maning's *Old New Zealand*, S. Percy Smith's *Hawaiki* (printed from the *Polynesian Journal*), and others.

Much more recently we have been instrumental in bringing back books that have dropped back, such as—

Jane Mander's *Story of a N.Z. River*, Satchell's *Greenstone Door* and *Land of the Lost*, Sir George Grey's *Polynesian Mythology*, Mr Justice Alpers' *Cheerful Yesterdays*, several of Nell Scanlan's novels, and others.

The policy of a N.Z. publishing house is one of its corner-stones. There are to-day about nine or ten firms here that issue sufficient new books to be classed as book publishers, and each must have some publishing policy. Oswald Sealy Ltd. (Auckland) have a plan behind their ventures with children's books, so have the Caxton Press (Christchurch) with its excellently produced cultural publications, the P.P.S. with its topical and politically-minded issues, and A. W. Reed with his growing general list.

The publishing policy of W. & T. is much the same as that of British firms of Macmillan, Murray, Longman's, type—that is, to publish books in cloth on the long-term plan. In other words we plan to issue books that are likely to have permanent value for readers and the Dominion generally and perhaps become standard works—even if we do not recover their costs for a number of years.

We like to publish books on Natural History, etc., subjects peculiar to N.Z., such as:

Laing and Blackwell's *Plants of N.Z.*, Hutton's *Animals of N.Z.*, Park's *Geology of N.Z.*, Moncrieff's *Birds of N.Z.*, Guthrie-Smith's *Bird Books*, Dobbie's *Ferns of N.Z.*, Neve's *Botany for N.Z. Readers*, Cockayne's *Cultivation of N.Z. Plants*, and we have considerable enthusiasm for works dealing with our primary industries, also agriculture and gardening—such works as:

Perry's *Sheep Farming in N.Z.*, Hopkins' *Bee Keeping*, Connell and Hadfield's *Agriculture*, Smith's *Sheep and Wool Industry*, Hilgendorf's *Pasture Plants and Farmers' Foes*, Amess' *Science of Dairying*, Lipscomb's *Breeding and Management of Livestock*.

All of these are standard works and have gone through many editions. Our farm series is being extended at the moment by various important books in the press by specialists attached to Lincoln and Massey Colleges, e.g.:

*The Principles of Animal Production*, by Professor McMeekan and others, *Pig Husbandry*, by Professor McMeekan and Stevens, etc., etc.

Then we aim to publish as many good books on N.Z. itself, its history, biography, and especially on Maori subjects. In addition we look for promising material in belles lettres, and poetry (we have published for two major N.Z. poets—Jessie Mackay and Eileen Duggan), and in fact anything that a general publisher can use. In this section we find such successful books as our three different *Maori grammars*—all successful, one in its 10th edition; the Truby King textbooks on Baby Welfare, that are used all over the world—bulk shipments are made to U.K., Australia, South Africa and India, and mail orders come from all parts of the world, as far apart as Siberia and Venezuela; Dr. Scholefield's *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*; and others.

Books on law, accountancy, medicine, music, cooking, all are welcomed and published. Then most people know that we issue hundreds of educational textbooks for primary, secondary and university use. These are not of great interest to library staffs—but it is worth noting that the 368 titles in Whitcombe's *Story Book* series sell literally by millions. We have had at times two millions in stock—but today nothing. The operating list that we work on comprised (in 1944) 1174 titles, but many are now out of print.

*Book M.S.S.* come to us from various sources—some are brought in or sent in by authors and in the case of many others we reverse the process and commission an expert to write a book for us on a certain subject—number of words, illustrations, etc., as specified.

A question often asked is—'Does the author pay?' Except in special circumstances which I will explain, the answer is NO. The publisher backs his own judgment and stands all costs for better or for worse. I have analysed our working list of publications—1174 titles—and find that in 98 per cent. the author has either been paid an agreed fee,



or he receives a royalty on every copy sold whether the book ever returns its cost or not, and incidentally, I might mention that some of our authors have received royalties regularly for over 30 years.

So much for 98 per cent. of the list. The remainder is more troublesome. Some of the titles are specialist subjects as *The Parental Control of Fishes in N.Z.* (Warehouse title: *Amorous Adventures of Teddy Trout.*) The authors of such books cheerfully recognise that their sale would be small, and unlikely to return cost, so they are willing—very often it is good publicity for them—to pay to have them printed. The residue of this 2 per cent. comprises various books or pamphlets—very often minor verse, controversial and religious pamphlets, etc., many of which may have been offered to several publishers without success. Well—we are printers as well as publishers and if the author wishes to see his work in print, we may as well do the job for him as anyone else. Result—98 per cent. all costs paid by publisher, 2 per cent. by author. The contrast used to be greater because when we compiled this last list many books, mostly in the royalty section and not in the paid section, had gone out of print. So much for who pays—there is little need for an author to pay for the publication of his work if it is sufficiently good or of sufficient reader-interest to warrant publication.

What I have been dealing with is normal publishing. The war has made tremendous changes in book production. We are often asked why we do not issue so many books as formerly—the answer is the WAR. First of all it was paper shortage—then paper and labour—and to-day mostly labour shortage. With more work to be done than ever our works staff in Christchurch has been cut as much as 33 per cent. of our normal number. One bottleneck in a works consisting of many departments is enough to slow down production to a surprising extent—so we thought it our duty to concentrate on trying to maintain supplies of school books, the requirements of essential and war industries—the freezing works, the wool industries, jam, biscuits, pickles, manufacturers and other war requirements, such as tags by the million, labels, food containers, etc., also many thousands of Military Textbooks, Red Cross Manuals, War Maps, etc.

British publishers are having the same difficulties—shortage of paper and then labour—and as you know their paper supplies have been cut 60 per cent. The news from London publishing is that almost anything will sell to-day. The

biggest overseas firms beg us to print their best books here, but with the labour shortage we have to refuse most. However we have managed to do a few for London Houses; *Snow Goose*, Quentin Reynolds, Warwick Deeping, *White Cliffs*, and for other N.Z. publishers, who we have had to curtail our own publishing activities.

Well, I hope I have thrown some light on publishing in N.Z., as done by a typical publishing house. As you will see, every book is different, but each is a gamble. Just as much as a visit to Trentham or Riccarton, only there the result is more quickly known. The English publisher works on a basis of eighty million English-speaking peoples to sell to—but the N.Z. publisher has only one and a-half million, so more caution is required. New Zealand publishers are really not the pessimists that authors often accuse them of being. They know all the circumstances; the authors don't, their judgment is often clouded by enthusiasm.

From time to time we hear rumours of subsidies or endowments for publishers and I only hope that those who have borne the brunt of producing N.Z. books for the past fifty years will share in them.

In conclusion, I would like to thank your Association and its officials for the honour of addressing you and for the pleasure of being among you at this conference.

## THE FAILURE OF INTERLOAN

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*By J. Monro*

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I WISH I COULD SPEND the next fifteen minutes telling you a series of fairy stories. This sort of thing—'Once upon a time there was a young man, and this young man wanted to know something. But this was an enterprising young man. He did not sit at home and think "How much happier I would be if only I knew this; how much more prosperous I would be if I knew those things I need to know." This was an enterprising young man. He thought, "We have a library, this is what a library is for," and so he went to his library.

'When he got there he moved around the shelves, he looked in the catalogue, but he did not see what he wanted. When the librarian discovered him he was looking rather lost. She went to him and said, "Can I help you?" He